

RMR-D-122

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MAR 23 2005

YOSEMITE NATIONAL

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SUPERINTENDENT. YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK 3/19/2005
DEAR MR. TOLLEFSON:

REGARDING THE MERCED RIVER & OTHER PLANS FOR
THE PARK MY THOUGHTS & PROPOSALS ARE AS FOLLOWS.

- 1) SET A LIMIT: ONLY 20-25% OF TRAIL QUOTA USERS
CAN BELONG TO THE SIERRA CLUB.
- 2) IF PEOPLE VISITING THE PARK, OR A SECTION OF THE PARK,
ARE TO BE TURNED AWAY OR LIMITED, THEN THOSE WHO
ARE NOT U.S. CITIZENS SHOULD BE THE ONES FIRST
TURNED AWAY OR RE-DIRECTED. GIVE CITIZENS PRIORITY.
- 3) THE 1/4 MILE BOUNDARY FOR RIVER PROTECTION IS QUITE
EXCESSIVE. IN MANY PLACES 20 FEET & OTHERS 100 FEET IS
SUFFICIENT. 1/4 MILE BOUNDARY SHOULD BE THE EXCEPTION, NOT
THE RULE.
- 4) DEVELOP OTHER AREAS.
BESIDES VALLEY & WAWONA.

SINCERELY,

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2-22-AS
 MAR 22 2005
 TO Whom It May Concern -
 YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

May we please have
 an extension on
 comment period.

The plan is very confusing
 and I would like more time
 to study it with more
 information.

Thank you for your
 consideration

March 2, 2005

NPS Planning Staff
Statement on "Draft Merced River Plan Amendment"

Again, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Draft Merced River Plan Amendment. I would like to make three brief comments.

First, I have already submitted a comment on considering a day use visitor reservation system for Yosemite Valley as an alternative along with the current alternatives addressed in the plan. This day use reservation system would only be implemented during those peak visitor use periods (the summer months) and would be gradually phased in so both the park visitors, gateway communities and other stake holders would have an opportunity for input.

Secondly, I am concerned about the "Overnight Visitors Populations in Yosemite Valley". I would like to thank Jeanne Aceto of Oakhurst for the research she has put into this issue and have attached a copy of the table she prepared to my statement. With the time allotted, I would like to focus just on the campsite issue. The 1980 General Management Plan called for an overnight camping population of 3252 people. Existing campsites provide for 2034 persons. Interim RMP numbers are 2934. Yet the Valley Plan calls 2340. The GMP defined low cost overnight opportunities as 634 drive in campsites plus 567 tent cabins for a total of 1201 low cost overnight family drive in opportunities. The YVP calls for 604 low cost overnight opportunities. This is a decrease of 52% in low cost overnight opportunities. It needs to be noted that the GMP numbers already reflected removal of 116 campsites and 268 lodging units for purposes of protecting the riverbanks. Yet the decrease in the more pricey accommodations between the GMP and the YVP is less than 1%. If Appendices "D" 18 month extension figures are factored in, there is actually an increase in the expensive rooms and cabins with bath. Time does not allow for a more extensive discussion of this issue, but it appears that the hotel experience is being promoted much more than the camping/tent experience.

Finally, I would like to acknowledge the huge amount of information in the Draft RMP. However it is very lengthy and difficult to understand. I would like to suggest to the NPS Planners that the attached "Overnight Visitor Population in Yosemite Valley" as written by Jeanne Aceto, is an example of how many of the complexities presented in the Draft RMP could be simplified so that persons like myself could get a better handle on what the NPS is planning in their proposed actions.

uth
Anwannee, Ca. 93601

el.com

OVERNIGHT VISITOR POPULATION IN YOSEMITE VALLEY

	GMP*	Existing	42 Interim MRP	YVP
CAMPING				
Drive-in	684 x 4 = 2736	402 x 4 = 1608	432 x 4 = 1728	330 x 4 = 1320
Group	14 x 12 = 168	2 x 12 = 24	12 x 12 = 144	10 x 12 = 120
Camp 4 (w/i)	38 x 6 = 228	35 x 6 = 210	60 x 6 = 360	65 x 6 = 390
Muir (w/i)	20 x 6 = 120			
Backpacking		23 x 4 = 92	53 x 4 = 212	30 x 4 = 120
Yellow Pine		4 x 25 = 100	4 x 25 = 100	
Tenaya (w/i)			20 x 6 = 120	20 x 6 = 120
Upper Pines (w/i)			45 x 6 = 270	45 x 6 = 270
TOTAL-Camping	3252	2034	2934	2340
LODGING				
Housekeeping 400	232 x 4 = 928	266 x 4 = 1064	266 x 4 = 1064	100 x 4 = 400
Ahwahnee	121 x 3.16 = 382	123 x 3.16 = 389	123 x 3.16 = 389	123 x 3.16 = 389
Curry**	208 x 3.16 = 657	201 x 3.16 = 635	201 x 3.16 = 635	313 x 3.16 = 989
Tent cabins	335 x 4 = 1340	427 x 4 = 1708		427 x 4 = 1708
174 x 4 = 696				
Lodge	364 x 3.16 = 1150	245 x 3.16 = 774	245 x 3.16 = 774	251 x 3.16 = 793
3.16 = 793				
TOTAL-Lodging	4457	4570	4570	3267
TOTAL	7709 (7711)	6604 (6247)	7504	5607

* GMP numbers already reflect removal of 116 campsites and 268 lodging units for purposes of protecting the riverbank.

** Curry Village includes rooms and tent cabins. Appendix D lumps them all into one category with an occupancy rate of 3.16. When tent cabins are broken out separately and charged with the same occupancy rate as Housekeeping (i.e. 4), the total number of overnight visitors comes to within two of the number cited in the GMP. Therefore, for consistency—have separated out tent cabins at Curry across the board.

NOTE: GMP—684 drive-in campsites + 567 tent cabins = 1251 low cost, overnight "family drive-in" opportunities.
YVP—330 drive-in campsites + 274 tent cabins = 604 low cost, overnight opportunities
(52% decrease in low cost, overnight opportunities—or 2,588 people per night)

GMP—693 hard-sided overnight opportunities.
YVP—687 hard-sided overnight opportunities
(less than 1% decrease)

Of the overnight opportunities remaining, how many are set aside for Park Partner volunteers, reducing availability to the general public still further



UNITED STATES ENVIRONMENTAL PROTECTION AGENCY

REGION IX

75 Hawthorne Street
San Francisco, CA 94105-3901

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March 14, 2005

INFO	ACT	RECEIVED: 3/21/05	INIT	FL
		Superintendent		
		Deputy Superintendent		
		Assistant Superintendent		
		Chief Administration		
		Chief Business Revenue		
		Chief Interpretation		
		Chief Facility Mgmt		
		Chief Resources		
		Chief Visitor Protection		
		Chief Project Mgmt		
		REPLY DUE:		

Mike Tollefson, Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Draft Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Subject: Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement, Merced
Wild and Scenic River Revised Comprehensive Management Plan,
Yosemite National Park, California (CEQ #050008)

Dear Mr. Tollefson:

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has reviewed the above-referenced Draft Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement (DSEIS) pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ) regulations (40 CFR Parts 1500-1508), and Section 309 of the Clean Air Act. Our detailed comments are enclosed.

EPA has no objections to the preferred alternative (#2) user capacity program or proposed El Portal Boundary, since it represents greater protection for the Outstandingly Remarkable Values (ORVs) of the river. Therefore we have rated the DSEIS as Lack of Objections (LO) (see enclosed "Summary of Rating Definitions"). Because of the exceptional archeological resources in El Portal, however, and the cumulative impacts to traditional cultural resources from past practices, EPA requests that the National Park Service (NPS) consider modifying the boundary and management zoning to provide more protection to these resources of concern to tribal populations, if an analysis of the locations of significant archeological and traditional use resources reveals they lie in areas that would allow more disturbance (zoned 3C or not within the Wild and Scenic River boundary).

We appreciate the opportunity to review this DSEIS and commend the NPS for its comprehensive analysis and for its extensive scoping. When the Final SEIS is released for public review, please send one copy to the address above (mail code: CMD-2). If you have any questions, please contact me or Karen Vitulano, the lead reviewer for this project. Karen can be reached at 415-947-4178 or vitulano.karen@epa.gov.

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Sincerely,

David P. Schmidt

for Lisa B. Hanf, Manager
Federal Activities Office
Cross Media Division

Enclosures:

Summary of EPA Rating Definitions
EPA's Detailed Comments

cc: American Indian Council of Mariposa

EPA DETAILED COMMENTS ON THE DRAFT SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT
STATEMENT FOR THE MERCED WILD AND SCENIC RIVER REVISED COMPREHENSIVE
MANAGEMENT PLAN, YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK, CALIFORNIA, MARCH 14, 2005

Cultural Resources

The entire El Portal area is considered to be a traditional use area by members of associated Indian tribes, which include Southern Sierra Miwuk Nation and the Paiute and Central Sierra Me-wuk (p. III-72). The cumulative impacts analysis notes that development of facilities within the river corridor have disturbed or destroyed numerous traditional cultural resources and compromised the integrity of numerous other such resources (p. IV-84). It is not clear to what extent these past impacts occurred in El Portal. The DSEIS also states that El Portal is currently the focus of a study to inventory and document traditional resources important to Indian people, and that currently only incidental information exists for El Portal (III-71).

Additionally, El Portal contains some of the oldest prehistoric sites in the river corridor (IV-78); sites that are *exceptional in their significance to the local American Indian community* (III-70). The El Portal archeological district contains 17 known sites (III-69). While the preferred boundary alternative is more protective than the no action alternative, potential benefits and impacts, considering cumulative past impacts, should be considered when delineating and zoning the El Portal boundary.

The DSEIS indicates that consultation with Tribes has occurred and that they collectively expressed concerns relating to continued access to the river corridor for traditional practices, as well as protection and preservation of important natural and cultural resources. While the user capacity component will not apply to tribal access (p. II-15), the DSEIS does not directly address how the El Portal boundary designations respond to this population's concerns.

Recommendation:

To the extent known, provide additional information in the FSEIS regarding archeological and traditional cultural resources within the El Portal boundary and considering past impacts, discuss what zoning and boundary elements would be most protective of these resources of concern to tribal populations. Consider the possibility of modifying the boundary and zoning of the preferred alternative if the locations of significant sites and traditional resources lie within zoning designations more prone to disturbance (3C or outside Wild and Scenic River boundary).

U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Rating System for
Draft Environmental Impact Statements
Definitions and Follow-Up Action*

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Environmental Impact of the Action

LO – Lack of Objections

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) review has not identified any potential environmental impacts requiring substantive changes to the proposal. The review may have disclosed opportunities for application of mitigation measures that could be accomplished with no more than minor changes to the proposal.

EC – Environmental Concerns

EPA review has identified environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment. Corrective measures may require changes to the preferred alternative or application of mitigation measures that can reduce these impacts.

EO – Environmental Objections

EPA review has identified significant environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to provide adequate protection for the environment. Corrective measures may require substantial changes to the preferred alternative or consideration of some other project alternative (including the no-action alternative or a new alternative). EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts.

EU – Environmentally Unsatisfactory

EPA review has identified adverse environmental impacts that are of sufficient magnitude that they are unsatisfactory from the standpoint of public health or welfare or environmental quality. EPA intends to work with the lead agency to reduce these impacts. If the potential unsatisfactory impacts are not corrected at the final EIS stage, this proposal will be recommended for referral to the Council on Environmental Quality (CEQ).

Adequacy of the Impact Statement

Category 1 – Adequate

EPA believes the draft EIS adequately sets forth the environmental impact(s) of the preferred alternative and those of the alternatives reasonably available to the project or action. No further analysis of data collection is necessary, but the reviewer may suggest the addition of clarifying language or information.

Category 2 – Insufficient Information

The draft EIS does not contain sufficient information for EPA to fully assess environmental impacts that should be avoided in order to fully protect the environment, or the EPA reviewer has identified new reasonably available alternatives that are within the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which could reduce the environmental impacts of the action. The identified additional information, data, analyses or discussion should be included in the final EIS.

Category 3 – Inadequate

EPA does not believe that the draft EIS adequately assesses potentially significant environmental impacts of the action, or the EPA reviewer has identified new, reasonably available alternatives that are outside of the spectrum of alternatives analyzed in the draft EIS, which should be analyzed in order to reduce the potentially significant environmental impacts. EPA believes that the identified additional information, data, analyses, or discussions are of such a magnitude that they should have full public review at a draft stage. EPA does not believe that the draft EIS is adequate for the purposes of the National Environmental Policy Act and or Section 309 review, and thus should be formally revised and made available for public comment in a supplemental or revised draft EIS. On the basis of the potential significant impacts involved, this proposal could be a candidate for referral to the CEQ.

* From EPA Manual 1640 Policy and Procedures for the Review of Federal Actions Impacting the Environment. February, 1987.

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Yosemite National Park, CA 95389

let

March 21, 2005

Mr. Michael J. Tollefson
Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
Post Office Box 577
Yosemite National Park, CA 95389

Kristina - 3/22/05
Cyndi M. @
Supt's. office
suggested that
I send to you
via blue envelope
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MAR 23 2005

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Re: Public Comments, Merced River Plan SEIS

Dear Mike,

I am taking this opportunity to offer comments regarding the Merced River Plan during the public comment period. I understand that public comments will be accepted until March 22, 2005.

I have been employed in Yosemite National Park since 1973. I have worked in various capacities during this 30+ period, including as a park ranger, campground manager and concessions management specialist. I have married, raised three children and have been an active member of the greater Yosemite community. I currently represent District 1 on the Board of Trustees, Mariposa County Unified School District. In the early 1980's, I was one of a small number of parents who formed a non-profit corporation, The Yosemite Child Care Center, in an effort to address the critical need for quality, reliable and affordable child care for the dependents of park employees. I am providing this background so that those who may read my comments and not be acquainted with me will understand that I have gained what I consider a good deal of experience and a broad perspective over a considerable period of time as a local resident and park employee.

I have participated both on-the-job, and as a private citizen, in many park planning efforts over the years, including the General Management Plan, the Yosemite Valley Implementation Plan and the Yosemite Valley Plan. During each planning effort, I have provided both formal and informal comments regarding the need for employee housing that will allow local employers to attract, recruit and retain a quality workforce to support park operations, including the protection of park resources.

For nearly fifty years, the National Park Service has publicly stated an intention of relocating non-essential functions and certain employee housing to El Portal. As you know, the Service acquired the land now known as the El Portal Administrative Site for

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that purpose. Notable movement from Yosemite Valley to El Portal has taken place over the past two decades. However, nearly all substantive progress in moving non-essential services and employee housing to El Portal has been undertaken by the National Park Service. There has been no relocation of employee housing by the primary concession contractors during this period. With the exception of small cabin-without-bath units that have been constructed since 1997 to replace housing removed following the January 1997 flood, concession employee housing in Yosemite Valley has been "frozen in time" since the 1950's. The vast majority of concession employees reside in what would be considered substandard housing in any community in America. I would venture to guess that much of the existing housing (tent cabins) would not be permitted in any non-park federal jurisdiction, including elsewhere in Mariposa County. From my perspective, the long-term acceptance of this substandard housing has created some important social conditions:

The primary concessioner has not been compelled to address out-of-park housing in a meaningful way. I have many observations about this, but feel that they would be inappropriate to include in a public comment letter. However, I am certain that very few large corporations in America operate with a work force comprised of employees who live in tents or "tough sheds" that have no running water. I have witnessed the conditions in the concessioner employee housing—in large part, they are deplorable. I am convinced that the substandard employee housing is the primary factor that prevents the concession from hiring a quality workforce on a consistent basis to provide quality visitor services on a consistent basis. Substandard employee living conditions contribute significantly to marginal visitor services in many respects. The dilemma of suitable employee housing for concessioner employees manifests itself, in my opinion, in a vicious circle that includes dissatisfied employees, guests who are disappointed with visitor services, questions by the public regarding park housing policies, and concerns expressed about the over-commercialization of Yosemite.

The poor living conditions of concessioner employees contributes to the operational costs of the park. I will limit my comments in this regard my offering the observation that the park could feasibly reallocate public safety services that are now required to address community-based social issues to assisting in the general public and improving visitor services if employee housing conditions were improved at least to the degree that might be found in a typical community (i.e. small individual apartments). It is true that the new housing complex planned for the Curry Village area will make a marked improvement to the residents in that location (217), however, the majority of concessioner employees will continue to live in high density dormitory, cabin-without-bath or tent accommodations into the future.

The significance of this problem to the current issues in the Merced River Plan SEIS relate directly to the park's ability to provide a suitable location for the construction of quality concessioner employee housing in El Portal. I believe that the National Park Service must be permitted to exercise considerable latitude in the allocation of scarce land resources for this purpose. I am certain that no park concessioner, operating under the terms of a relatively short-term concession contract now (or in the future), will make

the substantial investment required in housing outside the park or administrative site. This is simple business—return on investment over time. I do not believe that the National Park Service will be able to legally compel a new concessioner to purchase assets of an existing concessioner that might be located on non-federal property. It will be imperative that the NPS have the ability in the future to structure a financially feasible concession contract that can incorporate the development of quality out-of-park housing as a requirement of doing business in Yosemite National Park.

I would like to address what I consider to be out-of-date data included in the socio-economic analysis contained within the recent MRP SEIS. I understand that the most recent figures regarding the socio-economic outlook for Mariposa County was obtained by Dornbush and Company in 1999. Having been a local resident for some time, I feel certain that local economic conditions and demographics have changed in Mariposa County considerably since that time. I recommend that current data be examined to determine whether or not park projections for the local economy are, in fact, accurate.

I recommend that you refer to the article published in the Fresno Bee on January 13, 2005, with the byline "Cost of Keeping Up." The focus of this timely article is the increasing cost of real estate in Mariposa County, and the difficulty that the working-class members of the community face in finding and acquiring affordable family housing. I believe this article to be an accurate and telling portrayal of what many park employees know to be true—there simply isn't enough affordable housing to sustain the middle class workforce.

The high cost of local real estate is exacerbated by the costs associated with commuting long distances from "town" to park worksites. I do not believe that the "pros" and "cons" of the out-of-park housing has been sufficiently treated in public documents to show an accurate and comprehensive view of this complex subject to the public who might not be intimately familiar with local or gateway communities. To summarize this point—much has changed in Mariposa, Oakhurst and Groveland in the past thirty years, and I do not believe that the planning documents developed by the National Park Service have fully treated this important topic. I recommend that an objective effort be undertaken by the National Park Service to gather further financial data and personal insights as to how park employees in all sectors have been affected by the changing local real estate market and the impacts of commuting from town to park worksites. It is notable, I believe, that over the past twenty years, many employees have grown to consider the El Portal Administrative Site as their "park" worksite and have only limited knowledge or understanding of the dynamics of living and/or working in Yosemite Valley, which remains the primary site of visitor facilities, services and activities. The gradual and insidious lessening of many park employees connection with or immediate understanding of visitor services has, in my opinion, been detrimental to the park.

I would like to address one very sensitive aspect of the housing market facing many park employees, particularly those who may be new to the area or first-time home buyers. Many park employees (especially those who have not been required to occupy government furnished quarters for some time), have been in financial positions to

purchase income property in local communities. In some cases, this opportunity dates back to the early 1970's when the park began intensifying efforts to relocate non-essential employee housing to the private market. I offer this comment not as a criticism of any individual employee or their personal lifestyles, but as an observation that many park employees have become inured to the difficulties other employees face regarding housing.

I have reviewed the Housing Element section of the recently adopted Mariposa County General Plan. After studying this document, I could find no real relief for significant numbers of middle-class park employees or, more significantly, the lower class of workers that the local hospitality industry relies upon. The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors offers little encouragement to potential developers of middle/moderate/low cost housing for working people in the Mariposa-El Portal-Yosemite Valley corridor. From my perspective, much of the local real estate market has been driven by upper-income retirees or professional people leaving urban areas elsewhere in the state to lead a "Green Acres" lifestyle in local rural communities or by persons who are speculating on their hopes that the developing UC Merced will bring new high-income residents to our county. I agree that some higher-income university employees will relocate to Mariposa County. However, I do not believe that these residents (most of whom will live on the western fringe of the country) will offer much-needed economic relief to the middle and low working class housing market.

Another dynamic associated with the limited middle and lower income housing stock in the local communities relates to the number of mid-range homes now owned and occupied by current park employees. In some cases, these homes will "turn over" as employees retire and leave the area—often selling their homes to new county residents who can "best" any offer made by established, local middle class workers. This is a concern, but so is the prospect that other park workers will retire and stay in the area, effectively "locking up" desirable, middle-income housing when few new housing opportunities

My position on the Board of Trustees (school board) has afforded me the opportunity to become familiar with the current trend of declining enrollment in our local schools. I have been told that approximately half of the @ 1,000 public school districts in the state are in a spiral of declining enrollment. Declining enrollment is being experienced in our county, and the result will be a gradual reduction of school programs to the degree that many parents, teachers and students will lose confidence in the quality of the local educational system. Of course, there are many socio-economic and demographic factors that contribute to this situation. On a local level, I believe that a significant contributing factor is the scarcity of suitable housing to accommodate a working class family. From my perspective, it is important that conditions conducive to housing suitable for families be available because a quality school system is an important contributor to overall quality community life. A high quality community life is necessary to attract well-qualified and suitable employees to provide the range of skills needed in the park.

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Again, as it relates to the Merced River Plan SEIS, it is important that real solutions to the park housing dilemma be permitted within the Administrative Site in El Portal. From my perspective, the "bottom line" is that the opportunities for affordable housing for park employees in all income ranges will only get worse in the coming decade. I predict that if this happens, all park employers (not to mention many others in Mariposa County) will find it nearly impossible to recruit highly skilled workers who will make a personal commitment to live and work in the area.

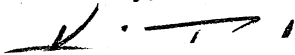
I would like to offer additional comments regarding specific points within the MRP SEIS:

Page III-128, final paragraph: "Yosemite Valley has the highest concentration of amenities in the park." While this may be a true statement, I would offer that Yosemite Valley has many visitor amenities, but very few amenities for the community of park employees and their dependents. This is an important point because I have come to believe that many people who have not lived in this community think otherwise. A careful assessment of what does exist for employee residents would reveal that there is little left of what was once a vibrant community. The sustained erosion of community life in Yosemite Valley has largely been dismissed by those who have not been directly affected. Those who have been affected have been significantly negatively affected. In my opinion, some steps must be done to address this situation because I am doubtful that the park will be successful in recruiting a new generation of employees willing to accept the burden of required occupancy in a bleak community.

At the risk of offending many who were directly involved in preparing the Revised MRP SEIS, I offer my own comment that this document was very difficult to read and understand. Much of the language is obtuse, and the conclusions drawn are vague. Much of the text is, in my opinion, optimistically forward-looking and leaves much to the imagination of the reader as to future outcomes. Unfortunately, I don't believe that the average reader has adequate knowledge of the complex subjects contained within the various alternatives to draw meaningful conclusions and thus offer meaningful comments to assist the National Park Service in developing a workable and financially feasible preferred alternative.

I wish you the best in your efforts to arrive at a final plan that can be carried forward from paper to implementation.

Sincerely,



Enclosures

Cost of Keeping Up

Mariposa deputies do 12-hour shifts to free time for outside work.

By Charles McCarthy / The Fresno Bee

(Updated Thursday, January 13, 2005, 7:10 AM)

Mariposa County Sheriff Jim Allen wants his deputies to be able to afford housing in a booming market, so he is making it easier for them to hold outside jobs.

The deputies have been working 12-hour shifts for more than a month. The sheriff says this allows them to get three or four days off in a row at the end of their patrol rotations.

"I have a lot of talented people," Allen said. "I want to do what's best for them."

It's not an isolated move. In Madera County, patrol deputies have been on 12-hour shifts, usually as teams, since 2001. This also provides bonus time for organized training, Sheriff John Anderson said.

In addition to giving the Mariposa deputies time to augment their pay (the starting salary is about \$36,000 a year), 12-hour shifts allow the department to staff six deputies, rather than three, to back one another up in the mountainous, 1,455-square-mile county.

Allen estimated his starting deputies take home only \$1,734 monthly after deductions. Allen, who is elected and has been a law-enforcement officer in Mariposa for nearly 28 years, said he makes an annual salary of \$79,000.

Pay raises for deputies depend on negotiations between the deputies' association and the Board of Supervisors.

"I can't represent them in bargaining, but I can represent them as their boss," Allen said.

Allen and Anderson don't want their uniformed patrol personnel working in security guard positions. All outside jobs are first cleared with the departments.

Many Mariposa deputies work at outside jobs on days when they don't have to report for duty at either 6 a.m. or 6 p.m. They find work in construction, landscaping, auto repair and home health care for shut-ins.

Madera County Deputy Sheriff's Association President Scott Jackson said patrol deputies like the 12-hour shifts. They give them a chance to hold other jobs or have more family time.

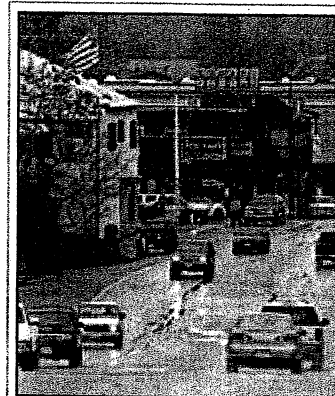
Jackson estimated that 25% of Madera's deputies have outside jobs, including shifts as corrections officers at the county's separately run jail and as ambulance paramedics.

"Most of them stay in the public service," Jackson said.

Nicole Gilmore, 28, has been a Mariposa County deputy for four years. Her 12-hour shifts allow her to work in home health care for shut-ins.

"I think it was a good decision, because there were a lot of us who needed to supplement our income," Gilmore said about the shifts. "But it stopped our personal life."

Mark Fogh, 35, has been a Mariposa deputy since 1999. The Army veteran and current reservist got married five days before he was sworn in. He and his wife live in a rented mobile home.



Sheriff's deputies have begun working 12-hour shifts in Mariposa County. The sheriff says this allows them to get three or four days off in a row at the end of their patrol rotations. The cost of housing in Mariposa has doubled in the past three years. Eric Paul Zamora / The Fresno Bee

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"I get more days off that'll allow me to go work construction," Fogh said. "I think it's good for the deputies to allow their time."

Fogh said Mariposa is a good place to live "if you make enough money to survive."

Figures available from the Mariposa County Board of Realtors show that from October to December 2001, the lowest-price at \$55,000 and the highest \$475,000, with an average price of \$155,244.

For the same time period in 2004, the lowest price listed was \$159,000 and the highest \$800,000, with an average of \$:

The least-expensive home sold in December 2004 listed at just under \$200,000, said Paul C. Ballard, president of the Mariposa County Board of Realtors.

"There has been a tremendous demand put on the mountain communities," Ballard said. "Mariposa County has had a tremendous growth."

Ballard said he expects to see an influx of international buyers and baby boomers snatching up vacation properties and homes just outside Yosemite National Park. There's already a demand fueled by the soon-to-open University of California at Merced, with dwellers wanting to escape to the Sierra foothills.

Mariposa County Supervisor Janet Bibby said she is "very aware" that salaries haven't kept pace with growth and housing. Her father was a constable and her husband a sheriff's captain.

Three million visitors pour through Mariposa each year en route to Yosemite, Bibby noted. She didn't comment about the board's continuing salary negotiations with the county's employees.

Dianne Fritz is co-owner of the Happy Burger Diner in downtown Mariposa. She also is the Chamber of Commerce president and a member of the Board of Supervisors.

"I'm concerned about the tiredness issue," Fritz said. "Twelve-hour shifts are hard to do. I'm just concerned about their ability to maintain alertness."

She said the longer shifts for deputies are providing better coverage.

But she cautioned: "As a sheriff, you never know what you're going to walk into."

At the Mariposa Yosemite Airport, four miles north of town on Highway 49, assistant manager Mark Steele said the county deputies on patrol and not working other jobs. They should be able to give them what they need."

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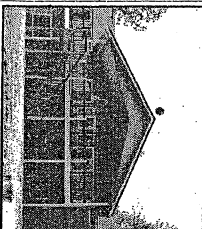
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5 ACRES: Graded building site at the knoll top abt Hwy. 49N affords distant views of the valley, while dense growth of oaks and manzanita buffer south. Some brushing done, power across the parcel. N town and airport. (13691) \$109,000

5 ACRES WITH SEPTIC - (3 Bedroom): Graded & compacted pad, partially brushed, power/phone serv convenient to the building site. Sloping parcel with oaks and a view on Lookout Mountain Rd. Put y vacation/starter home here! (13692) \$119,000

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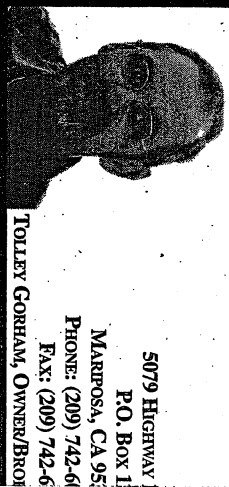
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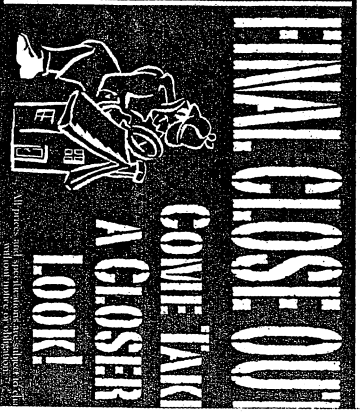
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98	WILLOW	3BR+2BA+4 Ton A/C+2 Car Garage+Entry Concrete	\$124,344
137	SEQUOIA	3BR+2BA+4 Ton A/C+2 Car Garage+Entry Concrete	\$132,893
46	Yosemite	3BR+DB+2BA+4 Ton A/C+2 Car Garage+Driveway	\$138,465
178	MANZANITA	SOLD ~ SOLD ~ SOLD	SOLD
141	MANZANITA	REAR-3BR+2BA+4 Ton A/C+2 Car Garage+Hardy Mountain	\$140,000



RMR-D-127

Berkeley, California 94704
February 18, 2005

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FEB 21 2005

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
Draft Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, California 95389

Dear Superintendent:

Thank you for sending me the CD containing the *Draft Merced Wild and Scenic River Revised Comprehensive Management Plan and Supplemental Environmental Impact Statement*. The photographs were most beautiful! I could almost feel the spray from the waterfall in the photo on the cover. Well done.

Alternative number 2 is fine with me.

Thank you.

Sincerely yours,

Yosemite National Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



page one of three

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RMR-D-128

MAR 23 2005

Pg 1 of 6

Public Comment Form

Merced Wild & Scenic River

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Revised Comprehensive Management Plan/SEIS

All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are invited to provide written comments or suggestions during the public comment period, which closes March 22, 2005. Written comments may be mailed to: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389 (Attn: Revised Merced River Plan /SEIS). Written comments may also be faxed to: 209/379-1294. Electronic comments may be emailed to: Yose_Planning@nps.gov (in the subject line type: Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS). Keep track of project status by regularly visiting the park's web site at www.nps.gov/yose/planning.

Note: Anonymous comments will not be considered. If you do not want your name or/and address to be subject to public disclosure, please state that at the beginning of your comments. Such requests will be honored to the extent allowable by law. Generally, The National Park Service will make available to the public for inspection all submissions from organizations or businesses and from persons identifying themselves as representatives or officials of organizations and businesses.

Name:

Date of Comment: March 21, 2005

Address:

Franco, California, 93703

Title Better to Be RPVE Resource Protection and Visitor Experiences
Comments

I do not want my address and or phone number to be subject to public disclosure.

I prefer the corridor to contain 853 acres as in alternate 3 and 56 acres reserved for administrative uses, as in alternate 1 or less than 56 acres provided these administrative uses protect the river and its corridor.

I prefer Alternative 4 Management Zone Quotas with Visitor Experience and Resource Protection (should be RPVE mostly for RP Forest).
Also: on peak visit days to manually direct traffic, offer free entry passes on a return visit either to Yosemite National Park or another NP if visitors need to be turned away at the entrance stations due to overcrowding.

(continue comments on back of page)

reflects attitude

However, this should not be done to the extent it pg 2 of 7
would bring too many visitors to the NP upsetting
the parks wildlife and natural resources past & recuperative
seasons. It would be helpful if visitors could be
told ahead of any planned trip that it's overcrowded -
but I don't know how.

People who have motion sickness on buses and/or
when someone else is driving should be allowed to enter
by auto with a medical note.

The area (~~an~~ ^{an} exception within itself) across
from Yosemite Lodge is a disaster! So much has
been cut away & it's too close to the river. I cringed every
time I see what's been done: the western tanager, black
headed grosbeaks, western wood peewees and robins etc etc etc
need this area more than people do.

Boardwalks are badly needed in place of asphalt in the
meadows & the lower Yosemite Falls trailways. Synthetic boardwalks
such as the one in Cooks Meadow is unnatural & very slippery
under certain weather conditions.

Increased enforcement esp. during peak visitation and
the most popular areas is a must - regarding feeding
wildlife, meadow trampling, garbage, etc.

Housekeeping campsite has tents too close to the river.
This area should be (tent use) moved further from the river.

Regarding the picnic tables newly placed in the Lower
Yosemite Falls area. The NP has not been able to manage wildlife
food issues that's why bears are put down every year. Remove
these picnic tables once there's indication that it's not
working in favor of wildlife and resource protection (due to increased ^{which is} exposure).
The Swinging Bridge area: visitors are in the
closed areas. There's the enforcement - they also feed
birds. The money spent on the above picnic tables could have
been used for ^{envelopes} ~~overgrown bus stop~~ (contd).

Yosemite National Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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Public Comment Form Merced Wild & Scenic River

PMR-D-128

pg 3 of 6

MAR 23 2005

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Revised Comprehensive Management Plan/SEIS

All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are invited to provide written comments or suggestions during the public comment period, which closes March 22, 2005. Written comments may be mailed to: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389 (Attn: Revised Merced River Plan /SEIS). Written comments may also be faxed to: 209/379-1294. Electronic comments may be emailed to: Yose_Planning@nps.gov (in the subject line type: Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS). Keep track of project status by regularly visiting the park's web site at www.nps.gov/yose/planning.

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Name: _____

Date of Comment: March 21, 2005

Address: _____

Comments

California, 93703. DO NOT subject
my address or phone number to public disclosure

learn just to better use in enforcement.

Replants to restore natural vegetation where there
are social trails & boardwalk or close off instead.

Ranger led walks should not overcook in meadows.
Visitors attending these walks need to be reminded to stay
on boardwalks & on paths. For each ranger walk if
several people are standing in the meadow - you've
got a problem. Isn't this true even if there's
snow on the ground?

The golf course in Wawona should be removed.
Pesticides are used to maintain a golf course. Golf courses
are the ultimate Boo Boo for resource protection. These

(continue comments on back of page)

chemicals (purported to be natural & safe - C'mon folks!) get into the water systems. Pesticides and rivers & streams don't go together.

RMR-D-128

pg 4

Hand out or rent out scoops and bags for visitors to pick after their pets doo-doo.

Bury Hetch Hetchy Park. The NP playing an active role to restore Hetch Hetchy would decrease overcrowding in Yosemite Valley and extend the habitat for wild plants and wildlife, and reduce traffic congestion.

If you have to water artificially vegetation up. The Ahwahnee town - it means the town should be there - Who needs Potted Plants in Yosemite! why at the Ahwahnee?

Employees whether concession or not should see video and take a written test regarding dos & don'ts for resource and wildlife protection. This will help file away excesses. Apache's National Park requires hikers in certain areas to watch a video and are given a questionnaire. This could help protect the Merced River etc. don't you think? if done in YNP.

Visitors should not be allowed to remove cut trees from the park. These need to decay in the park and to benefit wildlife. The concept of visitors taking anything out of the park gives the wrong message of Stewardship. Take out only what you bring in.

The Blue "sign" at the South Entrance - The NO feeding bear sign can hardly be seen. Reflects poor prioritizing for bear protection.

An informant ranger told me he has more important things to do than worrying about protecting half dome from visitor destruction. This is only one example of several that tells me rangers need better in attitude & priority to protect resources. (contd)

→ You may continue your comments on any clean sheet of paper ←

Page Three
of 3
Riner
Public Comment for Mined Wild & Scenic
March 21, 2005
RMR-D-178
pg 2061
155

The displays for public presentation are too lavish & too much and I don't feel are needed. Keep it simple & low cost. Terms such as "outstandingly remarkable values" can be abbreviated: use brevity and don't repeat jargon. Can a paragraph or two be written and ~~referred~~ referenced to several segments of your reports? in the beginning? How many times is a statement repeated?

How can advertising for public meetings be improved? Not many people attended the one I was at. Would advertising free subround (IX) to the park help bring more people to the meetings? for off season.

Please bring back my Lower Yosemite Falls Trail! The trail from Chuck Bowl that lead "directly" to the falls was connected! As one approached the falls you heard its thundering clearer as you got closer. You gradually saw it better as you kept approaching. The wooden bridge "floor" had slits - you could see some of the water beneath the bridge & the water visually highlighted better on wood. Auditory, visual & tactile continuity existed! The trail was there for years. Why was it closed off. Just because the other one was made for the disabled didn't

warrant disabling this wonderful experience
for others. It is disconnecting to detour
away from the original path. RMR-D-120, pg 6 of 1
RMR-D-128
pg 40

The asphaltting of the bridge is on offense.
& I believe was done to cut costs. The wooden
bridge existed without asphalt covering for years &
could have continued. If you have to replace
the wood do so. This is one of the world's treasures
over-manned by asphalt. Not aesthetically unwise.
It is good the bridge got drenched by spray.
That's the whole idea to get drenched with it.
It should be a drenching experience wood/bridge/
& visitors.

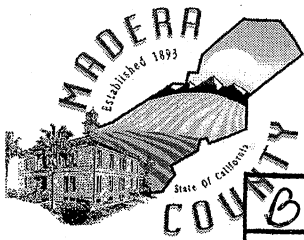
If you're worried about slipping and falling
don't use fiberglass nor recycled plastics such as
in Cools meadows boardwalk. Who's been injured on the
Lower Yosemite Falls bridge? If this is a concern where
are enforcement rangers to prevent kids from climbing
the rocks there & crushing to death?
Snow & ice is just as slippery on asphalt!

Barbara Yorgoyan
3433 E. Pine Ave
Fresno, California 93703
"Food" 14

PS. one straw visible in on auto can signal "Food"
to a bear. what do picnic tables do?

I appreciate the efforts involved in putting
these plans and materials together.

Enclosed is the response I got regarding the asphalt on the
bridge.



RESOURCE MANAGEMENT AGENCY PLANNING DEPARTMENT

Rayburn Beach, Director

2037 W. Cleveland Avenue
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Madera, CA
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FAX (559) 675-6573
TDD (559) 675-8970
mc_planning@madera-county.com

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RMR-D-129

March 14, 2005
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MAR 23 2005

YOSEMITE

RE: Draft Revised Merced River Plan, SEIS

Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
Draft Revised Merced River Plan, SEIS
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Superintendent,

Thank you for providing the County of Madera an opportunity to comment on the Draft Merced Wild and Scenic River Revised Comprehensive Management Plan, SEIS of January 2005. The County of Madera understands the importance of Yosemite National Park and the planning of the park's long-term health and vitality.

The economy of eastern Madera County relies heavily on tourism-related goods and services provided as a result of its proximity to the southern entrance to the park. As such, any impact to park visitation or to overall park visitation patterns will affect that sensitive and significant segment of the area economy.

Within the plan, Alternative Two – VERP Program with Interim Limits has been identified as the preferred approach. As described, there would be implementation of interim facilities and bus quotas under this alternative resulting in "local, short-, and long-term, minor benefits to the regional economy," but the real affects of this alternative could be largely dependent upon what specific measures are implemented. Visitor populations could see moderate to major adverse affects, potentially for the long-term if restrictive management actions are taken.

The County of Madera request that a second period for comment be established after a definite planning alternative is selected. Since the exact effect on the economy of eastern Madera County is largely linked to what alternative is selected and what management actions are initiated as a result, this second response period would allow for more precise and meaningful input. At minimum, this second public review period would allow the County to gauge the economic impact of the chosen alternative and plan mitigative measures to offset those impacts.

Thank you for providing the County of Madera the opportunity to comment. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact myself or Chris Boyle at the County Planning Department at (559) 675-7821.

Sincerely,


Rayburn Beach
Planning Director

cc: Oakhurst Community Advisory Committee
Dave Herb, RMA Director

To whom it might concern:

2/22/05

PMR-D-130

As I write this note - I'm reminded of all the beauty within Yosemite. We have camped many years in the valley and, also, do several day trips per year and want to encourage you to not take any complaints out or remove the trees, etc. etc. There are many families who can not attend the overnight at the Ahwahnee or the Lodge and camping fullfills that dream of staying in Yosemite. Please, please do not remove any more sites - we love being there and enjoy every minute of it. The campers are not your problem - we are amazed at how many people are charged in by law, ^{they} lose their money in the store and then throw out a pair within hours of their arrival. It's like a revolving door. ~~Thank~~ Sincerely -

Yosemite National Park

National Park Service
U.S. Department of the Interior



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RMR-D-131

MAR 23 2005

Public Comment Form

Draft Merced Wild & Scenic River

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Revised Comprehensive Management Plan/SEIS

All interested individuals, organizations, and agencies are invited to provide written comments or suggestions during the public comment period, which closes March 22, 2005. Written comments may be mailed to: Superintendent, Yosemite National Park, P.O. Box 577, Yosemite, CA 95389 (Attn: Draft Revised Merced River Plan /SEIS). Written comments may also be faxed to: 209/379-1294. Electronic comments may be transmitted to: Yose_Planning@nps.gov (in the subject line type: Draft Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS). Keep track of project status by regularly visiting the park's web site at www.nps.gov/yose/planning.

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Name: _____ Date of Comment: March 21, 2005

Address: _____, Lincoln, CA 95648-8755 _____

Comments

After reading the volume for the revised Merced River Plan, I initially liked the Alternative 3, but upon hearing your NPS representative speaker on March 18th and re-reading the Alternative 2, I found myself agreeing to the Alternative 2 proposal due the expanded day use of the El Portal area by the visitor and the limitation upon building too many buildings in that area. I feel this will provide more area for a visitor to enjoy and experience and perhaps take a bit of pressure off the river areas inside the river banks of the Valley.

P.S. In the future, is there any possibility of providing Plans for Yosemite in 100 pages or less, such as a Summary of the various Alternatives?

(continue comments on back of page)

March 22, 2005

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El Portal, CA 95318

RMR-D-132
pg 1 of 2
RECEIVED

MAR 23 2005

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Superintendent

Attn: Draft Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS

P.O. Box 577

Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Planning Team,

Thank you for the opportunity to comment on yet another major planning effort regarding the future of our beloved Merced River & Yosemite region. As a local resident and employee since 1991, I've been involved in the scoping and commenting process on many massive documents. I've often felt the excitement and importance of offering up my opinions to your planning process, but also the cynical feelings of hopelessness and futility that my concerns will be genuinely addressed or considered.

There are many in the local community that dismiss the NEPA process as pointless, because NPS has "already decided what they are going to do." I know that you and your team also love this place, and are honestly trying to balance the incredibly complex and conflicting demands placed on her resources. I thank you for the long hard hours that you devote to this difficult task! I also sincerely hope that my concerns, and those of countless others, make significant changes and improvements to the current Draft MRP.

Thank you for considering the following concerns:

Re-evaluate the "scenic" vs. "recreational" designation of the Merced River in El Portal, and add scenic to the list of ORVs for this section. We residents, and hordes of tourists, know that this segment of "Wild and Scenic River" is indeed phenomenally scenic. There are classic vistas of rapids, pools, cliffs, and riparian areas. People are drawn down to the river's edge, easily involving and inserting themselves into its scenic wonders. Chinquapin Falls, the granite cliffs of Parkline Slabs, and steep wildflower-strewn canyon slopes are uniquely scenic backdrops to this amazing river segment. While much river recreation (swimming, fishing, rafting & kayaking) takes place in El Portal, the scenic qualities are certainly of regional significance, and should therefore be designated as such.

The cynical viewpoint is that the El Portal segment was designated "recreational" specifically to allow major future development to occur within the Wild and Scenic corridor. I do not know if a "scenic" designation or ORV addition would mandate tighter limits on development, but if so, I am in support of that change.

Lock in maximum protection of ORV's and open space in the El Portal river segment corridor. Protecting the Wild and Scenic Merced River and her ORVs should be the absolute foundation of this plan. Some of the alternatives, however, are downright frightening in that their zoning allows for the possibility of massive development and resource impact within the quarter mile protection corridor. I have heard several times that "those purple areas on the map don't mean that development *will* occur, just that it will be *possible* in that zone." We need a better

guarantee than trusting the good intentions of future park administrations and planning teams!
Restrict future development with the most protective zoning possible. Protect the ORVs by establishing the widest possible river protection corridor.

As the primary goal of the MRP is to protect the river and it's ORVs, please ensure that your **final plan restricts future development in the El Portal area to already developed sites** (ie: Rancheria, Trailer Court, Motor Inns, & "downtown" by the Post Office"). In keeping with our unique "small-town" lifestyle, future development should be small scale, locally-owned, and primarily geared towards the needs of residents. Allowing a doubling of the town's population with 700-800 new beds, and developing the services that that population would require, seems utterly incompatible with a river protection plan. Alternative 4 is the only choice that even appears (on the maps) to offer "protective" zoning, and therefore should be the model to work from.

Hillside East and West should not be developed. Keep those scenic areas and resources zoned as open space. Add housing and administrative units at the trailer court, the sewer plant/warehouse, and by in-filling already impacted available space in Rancheria Flat and the Motor Inns. There may also be a few existing lots in old El Portal that could be made available for long-term employees to build new homes, compatible, of course, with the cultural landscape of the area.

Keep *truly essential* employee offices and housing in Yosemite Valley, but move the rest to **gateway communities that are more appropriate for expansion and development.** Those who live and work in the El Portal segment are fortunate to enjoy this beautiful but very narrow canyon. **Cramming more** housing, administration, commercial services, and parking lots into this narrow corridor is not compatible with a Wild and Scenic river, and would certainly impact the river's ORVs. The limits on the numbers of employees and residents within the El Portal protection boundary should remain at or near their present levels.

Create specific measurable thresholds on user capacity regarding trails, water quality, air quality, visitor experience, etc. I am a bit confuse by the VERP program, as the four alternatives do not seem to offer real differences in creating, monitoring, and enforcing user capacities.

Thank you again for considering my comments.

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March 22, 2005

El Portal, CA 95318

RMR-D-133

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MAR 23 2005

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Superintendent

Attn: Draft Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS

P.O. Box 577

Yosemite, CA 95389

To the National Park Service regarding the implementation of the Merced River Plan,

Thank you for the opportunity to be a part of this very important planning process. I believe in the park service and its job of *steward* for this valuable piece of land.

As an employee working in Yosemite, a mother of three children, and a citizen of this fine country, I view this planning process as an exciting chance to do something definite to preserve the unique beauty of the Merced River Canyon. We have the opportunity here to make sure that this river corridor is protected from over-development, for the sake of its own intrinsic beauty and for future generations to enjoy just as it is today. As I look around at wild and scenic places, I see many that have either been developed or are slated to be building sites. Once this happens, they are lost forever. I am still hopeful that as a body of people who care about Yosemite and the Merced River, we can do something to preserve what we have in this wild and scenic place.

I have read much of the revised river plan and find all of the alternatives lacking the complete protection that would be in compliance with the **Wild and Scenic River Act**. I am sure that just this fact alone will keep the park service from really acting on any of these potential scenarios. They all leave the river vulnerable to building in sites that are within the river corridor designated by the **Wild and Scenic River Act**. How would it be possible to do this anyway with this protective act in place?

Will we be seeing **ground-breaking** as the conclusion of this process, or will we be celebrating **ground-saving** and preservation of something that is becoming exceedingly rare in the world today? The Merced River is a unique place. Quiet and undeveloped except for the road that accesses Yosemite Valley through one of the most beautiful river canyons in the world (I believe). In the spring, the wildflowers define the north and south facing slopes as diverse ecotones. The Merced River canyon supports many unique species of plants and animals including several rare & endemic plant species. There are countless archaeological sites, many undiscovered. Many people enjoy the swimming holes, some very public and some very private on the river.

I would not like to see any more commercial development here. I feel that it would irreparably change the quiet undiscovered nature of El Portal and the river corridor here. We have something so special here; it is like no place in the world in its lack of commercial offerings. I would like to see **more protection for El Portal** specifically and for the whole River Corridor in general. The land and water and people of this canyon need our help to set this treasure aside. Now is the time to do this.

I appreciate all you are doing in this process, and I want to believe that we all want the best for this treasure which is Yosemite. What a mammoth task this is! It is the chance of a lifetime for all planners involved, to leave a positive legacy.

Thank you again for allowing me to be a part of this process. Please contact me with any updates or anything else I can do to make my voice and the voices of my children heard.

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24

Any way in the Merced River plan as it
 4 stands, I don't feel that the park service is being very generous
 5 or very kind in the American Indian values and properties that
 6 exist up there. They have been very extremely disrespectful in
 7 the past towards preserving that culture and that heritage. And
 8 there are several issues that surround the Merced River, and the
 9 boundaries at El Portal. 'It's my understanding that the park
 10 service intends to leave that open for development or the
 11 question of development in the future. I don't think any
 12 development should be done. I've been totally against any
 13 development in the valley for a lot of different reasons, and in
 14 closing, I'll just say that you have the facts and you have a
 15 frame. The park service has the frame. They've disregarded the
 16 facts. They have disregarded a lot of common sense in their
 17 planning and their procedures. They've shown a lot of disrespect
 18 for the American Indian community.

(End of testimony)

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RMR-D-136 pg 1 of 2

ENERGY AND COMMERCE

COMMERCE, TRADE AND CONSUMER
PROTECTION

ENERGY AND AIR QUALITY

ENVIRONMENT AND HAZARDOUS
MATERIALS

RESOURCES

NATIONAL PARKS, RECREATION AND
PUBLIC LANDS, CHAIRMAN

WATER AND POWER

ASSISTANT MAJORITY WHIP

<http://www.radanovich.house.gov>



U.S. House of Representatives

Washington, DC 20515-0519

GEORGE RADANOVICH

19TH DISTRICT, CALIFORNIA

438 CANNON HOUSE OFFICE BUILDING
WASHINGTON, DC 20515-0519
(202) 225-4540
FAX: (202) 225-3402

2350 WEST SHAW, SUITE 137
FRESNO, CA 93711
(559) 449-2490
FAX: (559) 449-2499

121 WEST MAIN, SUITE D
TURLOCK, CA 95380
(209) 656-8650
FAX: (209) 656-8643

COMMENT LINE
(800) 506-9463

March 22, 2005

Mr. Mike Tollefson
Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

RECEIVED

MAR 22 2005

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Dear Mr. Tollefson:

I write to respectfully comment on the Draft Revised Merced River Plan (DRMRP)/Environmental Impact Statement (EIS). As you know, I continue to be concerned about the impacts of the DRMRP on my constituents in the 19th Congressional District.

I. Scoping Process

Many comments were submitted during the scoping process about day-use parking and the replacement of low-cost, low-impact drive-in campsites. The DRMRP does not reflect these comments, which is a distressing sign that public input is being disregarded. Day-use parking slots are critical given that a lack of them diminishes public access and will compound traffic problems, particularly during peak visitation periods. In addition, low-impact campgrounds should be restored along the upper and lower Merced River to ensure those of minimal economic means can visit and experience Yosemite.

Public participation is essential to the planning process for our federal lands. Unfortunately, I understand that public participation at the hearings on the DRMRP declined from previous such hearings. I fear this reflects a lack of confidence from the public in the National Park Services' (NPS) ability to listen and take public input into consideration.

II. Plan Deficiencies

Resource protection must be balanced with a positive visitor experience in Yosemite National Park. Environmental, cultural, historical, and economic resources must be considered for protection as well as the Outstandingly Remarkable Values of the Merced River. In the NPS presentation given at recent public meetings, a chart shows that protection of resources takes precedent over action plans such as the Yosemite Valley Plan, which shows an imbalance between the two priorities. As the NPS continues to "un-encumber" development projects related to the Yosemite Valley Plan without completion of the foundation for the DRMRP, it demonstrates a lack of concern for Yosemite's future and its stakeholders.

Further, I remain deeply concerned that Yosemite National Park is becoming less accessible to the public. Possible day-use reservations, quotas and entry-gate closures should not be included

in the DRMRP as they are counter to a positive visitor experience and contribute the existing belief that Yosemite is becoming less accessible to the public.

III. Partnership Planning Effort

At scoping meetings for the DRMRP, community members advised you that an inclusive process for planning should be used involving all affected stakeholder groups. I respectfully suggest that the current DRMRP be withdrawn from public comment by the NPS and a cooperative effort, with all stakeholder groups represented in the process, be used to redesign this plan to make it more understandable and consistent with the NPS mission. Along these lines, I encourage you to explore creative planning options as part of Director's Order 75A (Civic Engagement and Public Involvement).

The planning process must incorporate representation from all affected partner groups including gateway communities, campers, rock climbers, indigenous Native Americans, the disabled, concessionaires, and local environmental organizations from beginning to end. Such involvement must be active and integral to decision-making as the planning process proceeds.

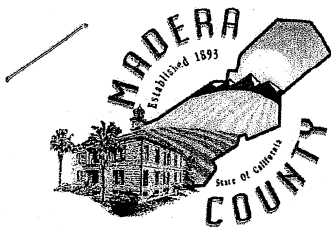
You may know I have reintroduced the Gateway Communities' Cooperation Act in the House of Representatives, which ensures that stakeholders have a seat at the table in the federal land planning process. Stakeholder groups by virtue of their traditional involvement, economic reliance, and physical proximity to lands managed by government agencies, such as the NPS, have much to offer. The knowledge, expertise and passion of these stakeholders are an asset to land management agencies crafting plans because stakeholders can help the NPS avoid time-consuming litigation that costs taxpayers and agencies millions of dollars annually. Involvement of stakeholder groups can also pave the way for more meaningful and positive comment and hearing periods with the general public.

In closing, as the former Chairman and a current member of the National Parks Subcommittee, I am committed to working with you to ensure meaningful partnerships are developed between my constituents and the NPS. The mission of the NPS to preserve our public lands for the enjoyment by future generations is a serious charge to be executed with integrity and cooperation. I look forward to continuing to work with you toward achieving this goal.

Sincerely,



George Radanovich
Member of Congress



BOARD OF SUPERVISORS COUNTY OF MADERA

MADERA COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
209 W. YOSEMITE AVENUE / MADERA, CALIFORNIA 93637
(559) 675-7700 / FAX (559) 673-3302 / TDD (559) 675-8970
Website: www.madera-county.com/supervisors

FRANK BIGELOW
VERN D. MOSS
RONN DOMINICI
MAX RODRIGUEZ
GARY GILBERT

RMR-D-137

BONNIE HOLIDAY, Chief Clerk of the Board

March 18, 2005

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MAR 22 2005

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

Michael J. Tollefson
Superintendent, Yosemite National Park
Draft Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS
Post Office Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Mr. Tollefson:

On March 15, 2005, the Madera County Board of Supervisors discussed the Revised Merced River Plan. The RMRP raises many areas of concern for the Madera County Board of Supervisors, one of which is the day use restrictions.

The Board is in agreement with the attached letter from Jeanne and Lou Aceto dated March 1, 2005, and the attached letter from Max Stauffer and Dan Carter of the Yosemite Sierra Visitors Bureau dated March 10, 2005. The Board's concerns with the RMRP are adequately addressed in the attached two letters.

RMR-D-55

RMR-D-49

The Madera County Board of Supervisors would appreciate your agency reviewing the attached two letters and responding to the concerns.

Sincerely,

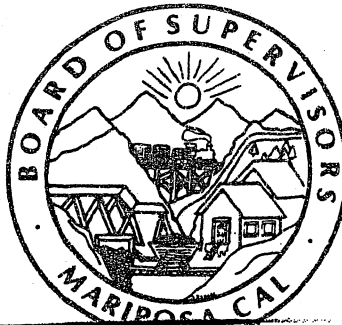

Gary Gilbert, Chairman
Madera County Board of Supervisors

GG:bh

Enclosures.

Mariposa County Board of Supervisors

District 1 LEE STETSON
 District 2 LYLE TURPIN
 District 3 JANET BIBBY
 District 4 DIANNE FRITZ
 District 5 BOB PICKARD



March 22, 2005

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Superintendent Tollefson
 Yosemite National Park
 Draft Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS
 Post Office Box 577
 Yosemite, California 95389

RMR-D-138 pg 1 of 2

RICHARD H. INMAN
 County Administrative Officer

MARGIE WILLIAMS
 Clerk of the Board

P.O. Box 784
 MARIPOSA, CALIFORNIA 95338
 (209) 966-3222
 1-800-736-1252

FAX (209) 966-5147
www.mariposacounty.org/board

RECEIVED

MAR 22 2005

YO...

Dear Superintendent Tollefson:

Thank you for the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS. The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors recognizes the importance of this process as it relates to the two primary objectives for addressing the user capacity mandate of the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act along with the requirement to better define the narrow river boundary drawn for the El Portal Administrative Site as it did not define or account for the location of some of the Outstandingly Remarkable Values in that segment.

Attached is a copy of the Wawona Town Planning Advisory Committee comments that have been approved and adopted by the Board of Supervisors. The Wawona Town Planning Advisory Committee prepared their comments as a result of a presentation that was given to them and the community on March 12, 2005.

The Mariposa County Board of Supervisors appreciates the opportunity to provide comments on the Draft Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS and urges the National Park Service to seriously consider the response contained herein.

Sincerely,

BOB PICKARD
 Chairman

cc: Board of Supervisors
 County Administrative Officer
 Planning Director
 Wawona Town Planning Advisory Committee

WAWONA TOWN PLANNING ADVISORY COMMITTEE

March 12, 2005

Mr. Bob Pickard
Supervisor
Mariposa County
Mariposa, California

Dear Supervisor Pickard:

On March 12, 2005 a quorum of the WTPAC heard a presentation by YNP Ranger Mark Butler on the Revised Comprehensive Management Plan for the Merced River Plan. This 25 minute presentation was followed by about 45 minutes of Q & A. Based on this we submit the following concerns which we hope you will relay to Yosemite Park personnel:

1. Parking Capacity at Wawona Store. This is misrepresented in the Management Plan. There are not as many useable parking places as sited. Further, out-of-area cars are being parked there. Visitors to the Mariposa Grove of Big Trees have very limited parking at the park entrance to, or inside, the Grove. They are instructed to park at the Wawona Store and be shuttled to the Grove. The proposed preferred option moves vehicles from the area of the Mariposa Grove, which is outside the Merced River area, to parking facilities that are inside the river boundary established by the Wild and Scenic Rivers Act. Further still, it is anticipated that, at least during the construction phase, the SDA Camp will be shuttling visitors that will park at the Store. The result is artificially limited parking and premature saturation of the lot. This will cause more frequent implementation of Management Action than would occur if the lot were used for local traffic only. The congestion already impedes ingress and egress by residents, particularly on Forest Drive. (ref.-Pg. D4, ff and Table D2 of Revised Plan)

Correction: Mariposa Grove needs its own parking, as it has had for over 50 years.

2. Revision of River Corridor in El Portal. The Committee urges that the chosen Alternative be # 1 (No Action). Since the 1958 Act establishing El Portal as an Administrative Site, YNP has been increasing its presence there. If present structures are deemed inappropriate, or if new construction is banned by more restrictive alternatives, the Park Service will have to look elsewhere. Wawona has been declared an alternative administrative site, if better sites are not available. The historic, low-density, residential nature of Wawona would be seriously affected. Many other problems, including housing, winter access, and resident protest, limit the usefulness of this site.

We trust you will convey our strong feelings in these areas.

Sincerely,



Edward Mee
Chairman, WTPAC

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RMR-D-139

pg 1 of 2

3/21/05

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MAR 22 2005

YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

To: Superintendent Yosemite National Park

Re: Public Comment involving the Draft Merced Wild & Scenic River - Revised Comprehensive Management Plan /SE/S

It would be in the best of public interest, that the up-date and revised document regarding above said draft should reflect a more concrete emphasis on the potential for a visitor reservation system. A more comprehensive, understandable and concise review of said draft would be more beneficial review of said draft for public security of this cumbersome document. For a true public understanding, may I suggest a more clearer summary of said document that could lessen the confusion and clarify your true intentions of said draft - a concrete viable summary would suffice such purpose.

Also, I definitely advocate holding off on any road alignment projects involving the "north side drive" and section D alignments until a five-year resource assessment can be made to determine a better feasibility for the elimination of heavy traffic congestion into the Valley. Finally, to bring into discussion and a full review of said projects with a general public forum (to be arranged by the Park Service) to necessitate a better understanding of your

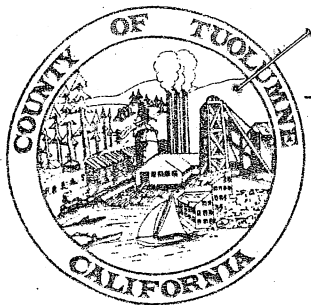
RMR-D-139 pg 2 of 2

directives of said projects. In all, I salute your
conscientious and profound efforts in trying to implement
a sound and broad base conclusion to all these loose
tangibles involving said document.

Respectfully yours,

J. D. [unclear]

Palo Alto, Calif. 94306



MARK V. THORNTON
DISTRICT 4 SUPERVISOR
County of Tuolumne

2 South Green Street
Sonora, CA 95370
(209) 533-5521
mthornton@co.tuolumne.ca.us

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RMR-D-140

March 21, 2005

Mr. Mike Tollefson, Superintendent
Yosemite National Park
P.O. Box 577
Yosemite, CA 95389

Dear Superintendent Tollefson:

I am disappointed that the National Park Service (NPS) has refused to provide a clear plan showing how the Federal government intends to protect the Merced River. The draft Merced Wild and Scenic River Revised Comprehensive Management Plan (CMP) simply does not fulfill the court's order to fix or replace your existing Merced River CMP.

The revised CMP provides little, if any, clarity regarding "outstanding remarkable values." It is difficult to determine where they exist and how they are to be protected. Additionally, air quality continues to be a neglected area of concern. The revised CMP does not comprehensively address the issue of "user capacities" throughout the Valley. Population impacts valley-wide will affect the Merced River's ecosystem, and the NPS is obligated to identify and disclose those impacts.

Your revised document does not alter the existing "zoning" mistakes that are being used to justify the development associated with the Yosemite Valley Plan. In fact this "revised" plan simply reinforces predetermined outcomes in the Yosemite Valley Plan. The degradation to natural resources, cultural resources, and visitor experience that will be caused by the Yosemite Valley Plan should have been stopped by the revised Merced River CMP not justified.

Rather than go on at length with additional comments about the various defects I believe are in the draft revised CMP, it is more expedient to ask that the NPS withdraw this draft plan and start over. If the NPS continues with this draft it runs the risk of additional litigation. Why waste the time and money to go to court yet again? You know the intent of the plaintiffs, the direction of the court, and the mission statement of the NPS, so pull this plan and do the right thing: write an intellectually honest, scientifically sound, environmentally sensitive, and socially responsible management plan for the Merced River and save Yosemite from the crass commercialism that exists in the current Yosemite Valley Plan.

Sincerely,

INFO	ACT	RECEIVED: 3/23/05	INIT	DATE
		Superintendent		
		Deputy Superintendent		
		Assistant Superintendent		
		Chief Administration		
		Chief Business Revenue		
		Chief Interpretation		
		Chief Facility Mgmt		
		Chief Resources		
		Chief Visitor Protection		
		Chief Project Mgmt		
		Yosemite Planning		
		REPLY DUE:		

Mark V. Thornton
District 4 Supervisor



Mitzi Thornley
10/26/2004 03:39 PM
PDT

To: "Gary Hayward" <ghayward@newfields.com>
cc:
Subject: Re: Fw: Fw: Save the date!

Yes, I have his package ready and will get it out to him fedex overnight. It will go out tomorrow.(10/27/04).
Do you happen to have his phone number?

Mitzi Thornley
Administrative Support Project Management
Yosemite National Park
PO Box 700
El Portal Ca. 95318
Ph: 209-379-1221
Fax: 209-379-1295
EMail: Mitzi_Thornley@nps.gov
"Gary Hayward" <ghayward@newfields.com>



"Gary Hayward"
<ghayward@newfields.com>
10/26/2004 04:27 PM
AST

To: <Mitzi_Thornley@nps.gov>
cc:
Subject: Fw: Fw: Save the date!

Mitzi

Here is Bob Mannings home mail address.

Can we get himn a package together for tomorrow's fedex?

Gary

----- Original Message -----

From: "Robert Manning" <Robert.Manning@uvm.edu>
To: "Gary Hayward" <ghayward@newfields.com>
Sent: Tuesday, October 26, 2004 3:39 PM
Subject: Re: Fw: Save the date!

> Gary -
>
> I left you a phone message yesterday. My home address is 32 Edgewood
Lane,
> Burlington, VT 05401. I'll be glad to review the document(s). I should
be
> around for the next week or so, so please call and lets talk about the
> status of things at the park. Thanks.
>
> -- Bob
>
>
> At 03:37 PM 10/26/04 -0400, you wrote:
> >Bob
> >



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Computer name: inpyosems12
Printer name: \\inpyosems12\Xerox Docu Center 425
Printer model: Xerox Document Centre 425
Color support: No
Port name(s): 165.83.253.74
Data format: RAW
Share name: Xerox Docu Center 425
Location: Planning and Compliance Trailer
Comment: Xerox Document Center 425ST
Driver name: UNIDRV.DLL
Data file: xxd4253a.gpd
Config file: xxuiw13a.dll
Help file: UNIDRV.HLP
Driver version: 5.00
Environment: Windows NT x86

Additional files used by this driver:

C:\WINDOWS\System32\spool\DRIVERS\W32X86\3\PCL5ERES.DLL (5.00.2184.1)
C:\WINDOWS\System32\spool\DRIVERS\W32X86\3\TTFSUB.GPD
C:\WINDOWS\System32\spool\DRIVERS\W32X86\3\UNIRES.DLL (5.2.3790.99
(srv03_qfe.031024-1644))
C:\WINDOWS\System32\spool\DRIVERS\W32X86\3\UNIDRVUI.DLL (5.2.3790.99
(srv03_qfe.031024-1644))
C:\WINDOWS\System32\spool\DRIVERS\W32X86\3\STDNAMES.GPD
C:\WINDOWS\System32\spool\DRIVERS\W32X86\3\COVERPCL.DAT
C:\WINDOWS\System32\spool\DRIVERS\W32X86\3\xxres3a.dll (1, 3, 12, 2)
C:\WINDOWS\System32\spool\DRIVERS\W32X86\3\XCWCAS32.DLL
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C:\WINDOWS\System32\spool\DRIVERS\W32X86\3\XCWPBK.HLP
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YOSEMITE NATIONAL PARK

COMMENTS ON DRAFT MERCED WILD & SCENIC RIVER REVISED COMPREHENSIVE MANAGEMENT PLAN AND SUPPLEMENTAL ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT STATEMENT (DRAFT REVISED MERCED RIVER PLAN/SEIS)

Resolution # 00-08-05

Be it Resolved by the Community Council of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians

WHEREAS: The Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians of the Tuolumne Rancheria is a federally recognized Indian Tribe with a Constitution approved by the Secretary of the Interior; and

WHEREAS: There is a requirement to participate in Government-to-Government consultation with Yosemite National Park; and

WHEREAS: The Community Council has reviewed the January 2005 Draft Revised Merced River Plan/SEIS and has developed comments on the Draft.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT: The Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians is opposed to further development along the Merced River corridor. Among our concerns are continued and increased impacts to cultural sites and resources; insufficient Park staffing to properly monitor even greater impacts from even more development; and further depletion of ground water that would come with the building of additional "comforts" for the purpose of attracting even more Park visitors, with the accompanying, far-reaching, negative, effects on air quality, water quality, plants and animals, and to our traditional use areas. More development would lead to more of degradation of the environment than has already occurred.

CERTIFICATION

I, Kevin A. Day, Chairman of the Tuolumne Band of Me-Wuk Indians, hereby certify that the foregoing Resolution was adopted on March 31, 2005, at a duly called meeting of the Tuolumne Me-Wuk Community Council, at which a quorum was present by a vote of 32 yes, 1 no, and 1 abstentions.

Kevin A. Day
Kevin A. Day - Chairman

4-5-05
Date

Tom Heider
Attest - Tribal Member at Large

4/5/05
Date